



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

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January 10, 2018

Julie Collins
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Lower Snake River Compensation Plan
1387 S. Vinnell Way, Suite 343
Boise, ID 83709



Dear Julie,

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) sincerely appreciates the support provided through the Lower Snake River Compensation Plan (LSRCP) through contract #F16AC00030. As you know, we use these funds to hire staff that monitors spring Chinook salmon fisheries in Oregon's Snake River tributaries ensuring mitigation is delivered to the State of Oregon, that harvest objectives and LSRCP goals are met, and that fisheries are compliant with permits provided by NOAA under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

In the Imnaha and Lostine Rivers, the minimum threshold for implementing fisheries is approximately 350 wild adults. Pre-season estimates provided in January 2016 suggested a return of 421 and 240 N-O adults to the Imnaha and Lostine Rivers, respectively. Considering allowable impacts to ESA-listed wild adults, only a modest fishery is permitted on the Imnaha River. We also expected just 111 N-O and 178 H-O adults to return to Lookingglass Creek, which is not sufficient to support a recreational fishery. In-season revisions to these estimates occurred in late-June 2017 and managers were advised by our technical staff to treat these return estimates as maximums. On this advice, we decided not to implement fisheries in the Imnaha River in 2017. This decision proved justified, as post-season returns to the Imnaha were estimated at 323 N-O adults which is below the minimum level required.

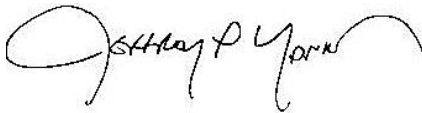
Hiring quality candidates for this fishery monitoring project involves a lengthy process that begins in early-spring, well before run estimates are revised and decisions are made. When it appeared fisheries would be limited in 2017, we conservatively hired only two of the five positions allocated for this project. After making the decision to curtail fisheries, the staff we hired under this contract were re-tasked to other LSRCP projects as was discussed with your staff.

During the summer of 2017, our creel staff provided support to both LSRCP hatchery and research programs. Creel staff worked at the Imnaha Satellite Facility to process and transport Chinook salmon and Bull Trout. In addition, staff assisted at Lookingglass Fish Hatchery performing fish culture and maintenance activities. Creel staff also provided support to our LSRCP research projects, entering all of the spawning ground survey data from 1987 to 1996 into databases. Our staff also entered data from the Imnaha River Weir into the regional FINS database for Chinook salmon and Bull Trout.

Although our staff was unable to carry out their specified duties, they were able to make productive contributions toward LSRCP projects and objectives. Our hatchery production and research staff complemented their work ethic, attention to detail, and positive attitudes. We greatly appreciate LSRCP's flexibility and understanding of the dynamic nature of fishery management in the Snake River basin.

This letter meets our annual reporting requirement through contract #F16AC00030 in lieu of a summary creel report for 2017. If you have any further questions, please let me know. Thanks for your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Yanke", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jeff Yanke
Wallowa District Fish Biologist
Enterprise, OR